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JONES, Henry Arthur.
The Goal.

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THE GOAL

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

BY

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

AUTHOR OF

“THE TEMPTER,” “THE CRUSADERS,” “MICHAEL AND HIS LOST
ANGEL,” “THE LIARS,” “THE MASQUERADERS,” “THE
DANCING GIRL,” “THE CASE OF REBELLIOUS SUSAN,”
“THE TRIUMPH OF THE PHILISTINES,” “THE
ROGUE’S COMEDY,” “THE PHYSICIAN,”
“THE MIDDLEMAN,” “SAINTS
AND SINNERS,” “JUDAH,”
ETC.

LONDON

PRINTED AT THE CHISWICK PRESS

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PERSONS REPRESENTED.

SIR STEPHEN FAMARISS, the great engineer.

DANIEL FAMARISS, his son, engineer.

SIR LYDDEN CRANE, M.D.

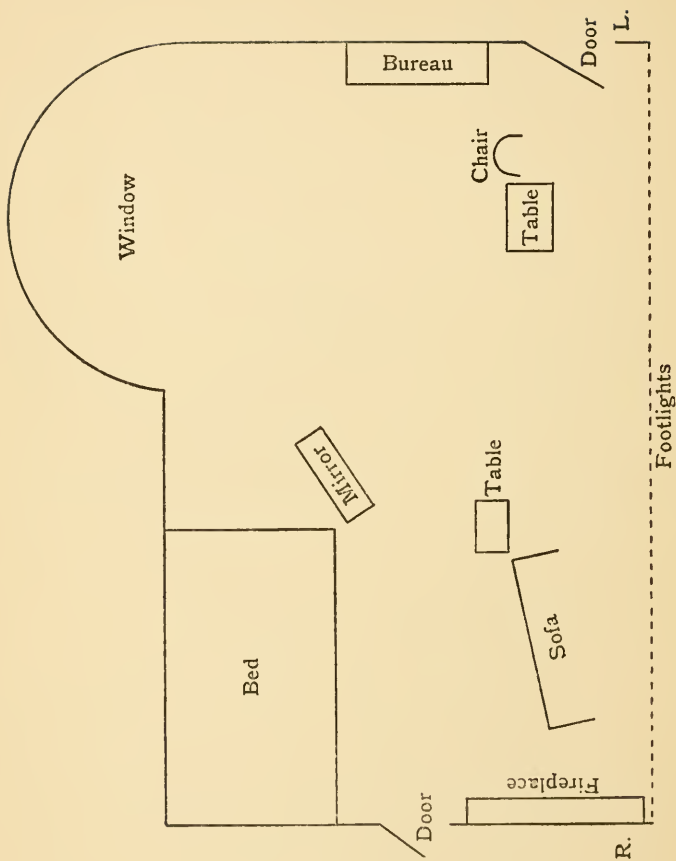
ADAMS, Sir Stephen's butler.

PEGGIE LOVEL.

NURSE CLANDON.

SCENE.—SIR STEPHEN'S BEDROOM IN BELGRAVIA.

TIME.—THE PRESENT.





THE GOAL.

SCENE.—*The Bedroom of SIR STEPHEN FAMARRISS, Belgrave Square. A very richly-furnished apartment, with every evidence of wealth and luxury. A handsome brass bedstead, with the bedclothes rumpled, is in the left-hand corner of the room, placed sideways to audience. A large bow-window, rather deeply recessed, is in the right-hand corner of the room, and looks across to the handsome ballroom of another house. The ballroom is lighted and decorated for a dance, and figures are seen moving across its windows in accordance with indications given through the play. Where, however, the stage appointments do not allow of the ballroom being seen and the guests being handsomely dressed, the window must be so arranged as to suggest that the ballroom is at the side, out of sight, and not facing the audience. A door left down stage. Above the door a large handsome bureau. A door right up stage. Down stage left a handsome fireplace with small fire burning. A mirror over fireplace. A large comfortable sofa down stage right centre. A small table left of sofa just above it. Another small table down stage left with lamp lighted, a medicine bottle or two, spirit lamp, and other paraphernalia of a sick room. A large pier looking-glass up stage at foot of bedstead. Other furniture as required, all indicating great wealth and comfort. Time, about ten on an April evening. Moonlight through window. Discover on sofa, asleep, SIR STEPHEN FAMARRISS. A rug is thrown over him, and his head is buried in a pillow, so that the audience see nothing but a figure under the rug. NURSE CLANDON, in nurse's costume, about thirty, is seated in chair at*

table, reading. The door, left, is very softly opened, and SIR LYDDEN CRANE enters, a little, dry, shrewd, wizened old man about seventy, with manners of a London physician. Nurse rises and puts down her book.

CRANE. Well? How has he been all the afternoon?

NURSE. Just as usual. He won't keep quiet. About an hour ago he fell asleep.

[Pointing to SIR STEPHEN.]

CRANE. Mr. Daniel Famariss has not arrived?

NURSE. No. He sent another telegram for him this evening. And he keeps on asking for the evening papers.

CRANE. Well?

NURSE. I've kept them from him. They all have long accounts of his illness. *[Taking an evening paper from under the table-cover, giving it to CRANE.]* Look!

CRANE. *[Taking paper, reading.]* "Sir Stephen Famariss, the great engineer, is dying——" Hum!

[A very gentle knock is heard at door left.]

Nurse goes to it, opens it. ADAMS comes in a step.

ADAMS. I beg pardon. Mrs. Lovel has sent in to ask how Sir Stephen is; and to say that she is very sorry the ballroom is so near his bedroom; and if the noise of the ball will upset Sir Stephen she will be very pleased to put it off, and send her guests away.

NURSE. What do you think, Sir Lydden?

CRANE. All excitement is very dangerous for Sir Stephen. The next attack may be fatal. *[SIR STEPHEN stirs, throws off the quilt. He is in a rich dressing-gown. A wiry, handsome, very intellectual-looking man about seventy-five; well-seasoned, vigorous frame; pale, sharp, strong features, showing signs of great recent pain. He listens as SIR LYDDEN continues.]* Will you give my compliments to Mrs.

Lovel, and say that since she is so kind I will beg her to postpone the ball?

SIR S. [*Behind him.*] Will you give my compliments to Mrs. Lovel, and say that since she is so kind I will beg her to do nothing of the kind. What rubbish, Crane! Because I happen to be dying, to stop the innocent pleasure of a couple of hundred young people! Thank Mrs. Lovel very much, Adams, for sending in, and say that I am not at all sure that I shall die to-night; but that if I do, her dancing won't in the least interfere with my dying, and I hope she won't allow my dying to interfere with her dancing. And in any case I very much wish the ball to take place. [*Very imperiously.*] It's not to be put off! You understand?

ADAMS. Yes, Sir Stephen. [*Going.*]

SIR S. And, Adams, give my compliments to Mrs. Lovel, and say that if she doesn't mind I should like to see Miss Lovel in her ball-dress for a moment before the ball. Say that I'm quite presentable, and I won't frighten Miss Lovel. [*Exit ADAMS.*]

SIR S. Well, Crane, am I going off this time?

CRANE. This last attack coming so quickly after the other is very alarming and—very dangerous.

SIR S. Yes, but am I going to pull through again, or must I put up the shutters?

CRANE. Well—well——

SIR S. [*Seeing paper on floor where CRANE has thrown it.*] Is that to-night's paper? [*No reply.*] Give it to me, Nurse!

NURSE. [*Deprecatingly.*] Sir Stephen——

SIR S. Give it to me.

[*Nurse gives it to him reluctantly, and then goes up to window.*]

SIR S. [*Reading from paper.*] “Alarming illness of Sir Stephen Famariss. Angina Pectoris. Fatal symptoms. Sir Stephen Famariss, the great engineer, is dying——” There's nothing like making sure of your facts.

CRANE. Too sure!

SIR S. [*Drily.*] So I think. What do you say? How long am I going to live?

CRANE. Well——

SIR S. Come out with it, old friend. I'm not afraid to hear.

CRANE. With the greatest care I see no reason why you shouldn't live some weeks—or months.

SIR S. Shall I live long enough to carry out my Milford Haven scheme?

CRANE. No. You certainly won't.

SIR S. [*Shows intense disappointment.*] You're sure?

CRANE. I'm sure.

SIR S. But I shall live long enough to start it, to put it into other hands, into my son's hands—if the rebellious fool will only learn wisdom and make it up with me before I die. I shall live long enough for that?

CRANE. No. I fear not.

SIR S. [*Going to bureau.*] But I've got a third of it on paper. [*Unlocking bureau, taking out plans.*] I've kept it here. I've worked at it when I couldn't sleep. If I can last out another six months, I can do it. Come, Crane, don't be stingy. Give me another six months! Eh?

CRANE. Sir Stephen, you won't last six months even with the greatest care. You may not last six weeks——

SIR S. Nor six days?

CRANE. Nor six days.

SIR S. Nor six hours?

CRANE. Oh——!

SIR S. Nor six hours. Thank you. I'm prepared.

CRANE. Your son has not come yet?

SIR S. No. I've telegraphed him twice—and my terms.

CRANE. Is it worth while—of course you know

best—is it worth while to stick out for terms when——?

SIR S. When one is in face of death. Yes—on a matter of principle. If Dan comes here, he comes on my terms. I'll keep my word; I won't set eyes on him—he shan't pass that door until he owns he was wrong.

CRANE. But——

SIR S. [*Getting excited.*] But he was wrong. He was wrong, and no power on earth——

CRANE. [*Soothing him.*] Hush! If he does come you must avoid all excitement in meeting him. Your only chance of prolonging your life is to keep absolutely quiet. You must lay up all day——

SIR S. Lay up all day! Don't talk nonsense!

CRANE. If you don't——

SIR S. If I don't——

CRANE. You may die at any moment.

SIR S. But if I do, I'm dead already. No, Crane, I'll live to my last moment, whenever it comes. When I do take to my bed, I'll take to it once for all, in the churchyard, beside my Peggie! [*Very softly, very tenderly, half to himself.*] My Peggie! My Peggie! If I do go off, I shall see her again I suppose—if it isn't all moonshine! Open the window, Nurse! It's getting hot here! [*The Nurse opens window.*] Open that champagne, Crane, and pour yourself out a glass, and pour me out a glass. My Peggie! My Peggie! I wonder if it is all moonshine!

[*The musicians in the ballroom opposite begin to tune up their fiddles. Nurse comes down.*]

SIR S. That's right! Tune up! Tune up! And Peggie Lovel promised me the first dance! Tune up!

NURSE. You must keep quiet——

SIR S. [*Pettishly.*] Run away! Run away!

[*CRANE makes Nurse a sign and she goes off, door right. CRANE has opened the champagne and poured out two glasses. He brings one to SIR STEPHEN.*]

SIR S. It's the eighty-four Saint Marceaux. I've left you half what's left of this, Crane, and I've left my mule of a boy the other half. He's my heir. I won't see him, no, not if I——

CRANE. Hush! Hush!

SIR S. I won't see him unless he submits. But I've left him every penny, except what goes to charities and churches. It's very puzzling to know what to do with one's money, Crane. I've left a heap to charities, and I've squared all the churches. I hope it won't do much harm. [*A little chuckle.*] There's one thing I regret in dying, Crane. I shan't be able to hear my funeral sermons. But you will——

CRANE. Don't make too surc. I may go off first, but if I am doomed, I hope the oratory will be of as good a vintage as this.

SIR S. It ought to be, considering what I've left them all. Give them a hint, Crane, not to whitewash my sepulchre with any lying cant. Don't let them make a plaster-of-Paris saint of me! I won't have it! I won't have it! I've been a man, and never less than a man. I've never refused to do the work that came in my way, and, thank God, I've never refused to taste a pleasure. And I've had a rare good time in this rare good world. I wish I'd got to live it all over again!

CRANE. You do?

SIR S. Yes, every moment of it, good and evil, pleasure and pain, love and work, success and failure, youth and age, I'd fill the cup again, and I'd drain it to the dregs if I could. You wouldn't?

CRANE. No. Once is enough for me.

SIR S. You see, Crane, before starting in life I took the one great cardinal step to secure success and happiness.

CRANE. What's that?

SIR S. I made an excellent choice of my father and mother. Not rich. Not aristocratic. But a good, sound, healthy stock on both sides. What's the cause of all the weak snivelling pessimism we

hear? What's the cause of nine-tenths of the misery around us; ruined lives; shattered health; physical, moral, intellectual beggary? What's the cause of doctors' bills?

CRANE. Well, what is?

SIR S. Men and women exercise no care in choosing their fathers and mothers. You doctors know it! You doctors know it! Once choose your father and mother wisely, and you can play all sorts of tricks with your constitution. You can drink your half-bottle of champagne at seventy-five and enjoy it! Another glass!

CRANE. No, I must be going! [*Rising.*] And [*tapping bottle*] you mustn't take any more.

SIR S. Don't talk nonsense. Sit down! Sit down! Another glass! Hobnob, man, hobnob! Life's but a span! Why this may be the last time, eh?

CRANE. Any time may be the last time. Any moment may be the last moment.

SIR S. Well, then, let us enjoy the last moment! I tell you, Crane, I'm ready. All my affairs are in perfect order. I should have liked to have finished that Milford Haven scheme—but if it isn't to be—[*deep sigh*—Hob-nob, man, hobnob!

CRANE. What a lovely wine!

SIR S. Isn't it? I remember Goethe says that the man who drinks wine is damned, but the man who drinks bad wine is doubly damned. Pray God you and I may be only damned once, Crane.

CRANE. Oh that's past praying for—in my case.

SIR S. Eighty-four! I was boring a hole through the Rockies that summer—ah, Crane, what glorious summers I've had—seventy-five glorious golden summers—and now—Hobnob, man, hobnob! You've had a good innings too, Crane.

CRANE. Hum! Pretty fair! I eat well, drink well, sleep well, get my early morning jog in the Park and enjoy it, get my two months on the moors, and enjoy them. I feel as fit to-day as I did thirty

years ago. There's only one pleasure that has left me!

SIR S. Don't fret about that! We thought it a pleasure, old crony, while it lasted. Now it's gone, let's call it a plague and a sin, and thank God for giving us a little peace in our old age. Yes, yes, let's shake our heads solemnly at the youngsters and prepare for our latter end. Ah, dear, dear, what a havoc women have made of the best half of my life, but—*[brightening]*—I've left some good work behind me in spite of the wretches. And, thank Heaven, my *throat* has held out to the last. *[Drinking.]*

CRANE. *[Drinking.]* And mine!

SIR S. Crane, what was that joke that came up at poor Farley's funeral?

CRANE. Joke!

SIR S. Don't you remember while we were waiting for them to bring dear old Farley downstairs Maidment began telling that story about the geese and the Scotchboy and the bugle——

CRANE. Yes, yes, to be sure.

[Beginning to laugh.]

SIR S. And just as we were enjoying the joke, we suddenly remembered where we were, and you pulled us up—and the joke was spoilt!

CRANE. Yes, yes, I remember.

SIR S. Crane, if Maidment tells that story at my funeral, don't pull him up——

CRANE. Eh?

SIR S. It's a good joke, man! Don't waste it! Have your laugh out, and say from me, that, other conditions being favourable, I'm enjoying it as heartily as any of you! You will, eh? You will?

CRANE. Yes, I will! I will!

[They both laugh a little. ADAMS opens door left, and comes in a step.]

ADAMS. Miss Lovel has come, Sir Stephen.

SIR S. Show her in, Adams. *[Exit ADAMS.]*

CRANE. I must be going.

[*Re-enter ADAMS, showing in PEGGIE LOVEL, a débutante of eighteen in her first ball-dress, radiant, excited, beautifully dressed, a vision of girlish loveliness. She is frivolous and self-conscious and full of little airs and graces, constantly glancing at herself in the two mirrors. She is in cloak and carries a large bouquet.*]

ADAMS. [*Announcing.*] Miss Lovel.

[*Exit ADAMS.*]

SIR S. Come in, Peggie. I mustn't call you Peggie any more. Come in, Miss Lovel.

PEGGIE. Mamma said you would like to see me for a minute before the ball!

SIR S. If you don't mind.

PEGGIE. How d'ye do, Sir Lydden?

[*Shaking hands.*]

CRANE. How d'ye do, Miss Lovel? Good-night, Sir Stephen.

[*Holding out hand.*]

SIR S. Don't go, old chum.

[*Taking his hand, retaining it, keeping*
CRANE.

CRANE. I must. [*Taking out watch.*] I have a consultation at eleven.

SIR S. [*Piteously.*] Don't go, old chum.

CRANE. It's really pressing. It's Lord Albert Swale. He won't last till the morning.

SIR S. Don't go. I may be meeting him soon, and I'll make your apologies. [*Very piteously.*] Don't go, old chum!

CRANE. I must. [*Nurse enters right.*] Nurse, I want a word with you downstairs. [*Nurse crosses to left, and exit.*] [*To SIR S.*] I'll look in, the first thing in the morning.

SIR S. Do. You'll find me—at home.

CRANE. Good-night. Good-night, Miss Lovel.

PEGGIE. Good-night, Sir Lydden.

CRANE. [*In a low tone to PEGGIE.*] You mustn't stay long, and you mustn't let Sir Stephen

excite himself. [*To SIR S.*] I'd rather see you in bed——

SIR S. [*Very impatiently.*] Tut! Tut! Tut! I won't be buried before I'm dead. [*Rather curtly.*] Good-night. [*CRANE waits.*]

SIR S. [*Imperiously.*] Good-night. [*CRANE is going.*] And Crane, remember—no whitewash on my sepulchre! [*Exit CRANE, left.*]

[*PEGGIE meantime has taken off her cloak and laid down her bouquet. All through scene she is eager and excited, glances at herself in the glasses very often.*]

PEGGIE. I'm so sorry you're ill, Sir Stephen.

SIR S. I'm not ill, my dear. The old machine seems just as strong and tough as ever, only—it's gone "crack" in a weak place. Well, I've knocked it about all over the world for seventy-five years, and if it hadn't gone crack in one place, I suppose it would in another. Never mind me. Let's talk about you. Go and stand there, and let me look at you.

PEGGIE. [*Displaying her dress.*] Do you like me? Do you like my dress?

SIR S. It's a triumph!

PEGGIE. [*Chattering on.*] You can't imagine what trouble mamma and I have taken over it. Long sleeves are coming in for evening wear. So I had long sleeves at first. I was all sleeves. So I had them taken out and short sleeves put in. The dressmaker made a horrible muddle of them. So we tried long sleeves again. I looked a perfect fright!

SIR S. I won't believe it.

PEGGIE. Yes, I did, I assure you. So at the last moment I had the long sleeves taken out and the short sleeves dodged up with lace. Which do you like best? Long sleeves or short sleeves?

SIR S. Long sleeves for ugly arms—short sleeves for beautiful arms!

PEGGIE. [*Frowning at him and shaking her head.*] Ah! what do you think of the bodice?

SIR S. Enchanting !

PEGGIE. It is rather neat, isn't it ?

SIR S. Neat ? I should call it gorgeous !

PEGGIE. Oh, you must see the one I've got for the Lardner's dance next Monday. Would you like to see it ?

SIR S. Very much—on Monday.

PEGGIE. I'll run in for a moment before I go.

SIR S. Do.

PEGGIE. That's a square-cut bodice. This is a round-cut bodice. Which do you like best ? Round-cut bodices, or square-cut bodices ?

SIR S. To-night I like round-cut bodices. On Monday I think I shall prefer square-cut bodices.

PEGGIE. I think I prefer a square-cut bodice. I had a square-cut bodice to this at first. I looked a perfect monster, so I had it taken out and this round-cut bodice put instead ; I'm not sure that it's quite right now, and I've tried it on fifty times—I'm worrying you to death.

SIR S. No ! no !

PEGGIE. Yes I am, and I can't stay five minutes. Are you sure you wouldn't rather have the ball put off ? We will put it off even now if you wish.

SIR S. Not for the world ! not for the world !

PEGGIE. That is so good of you. But I really think you'll be better to-morrow. I'm sure you will. You aren't really very ill, are you ? Do you like this embroidery ? *[Pointing to trimming on her bodice.]*

SIR S. It's beautiful ! Isn't it Indian work ?

PEGGIE. Yes, handmade. It took a man twelve or fifteen years to make this one strip.

SIR S. A quarter of a lifetime to decorate you for a few hours. It was time well spent. Ah, Peggie, that's the sum and meaning of all our toil and money-grubbing !

PEGGIE. What is ?

SIR S. To make our women-folk beautiful. It all comes to that in the end. Let Nature and Art knock

their heads together till doomsday they'll never teach one another any finer trick than to show a beautiful maiden to a handsome young fellow, or a handsome young fellow to a beautiful maiden.

[PEGGIE *has got behind him and is admiring herself in the glass.*]

PEGGIE. Really! Really! Yes, I suppose you're right. You're sure I'm not worrying you——

SIR S. No, no. Don't go. I'm quite at leisure now to the end of my life.

PEGGIE. Oh, you mustn't talk like that. So I may tell mamma that you like my dress? What do you think of the skirt?

SIR S. Isn't there too much trimming on it?

PEGGIE. Oh no! oh no!

SIR S. Yes, there's too much trimming.

PEGGIE. Oh no! Oh no! The dressmaker said there wasn't enough.

SIR S. Stupid hussies, dressmakers! They're like other folks! They're always the last to know anything about their own business. Tell your dressmaker that simplicity is the keynote of a great style in dressmaking, and engineering—subtle simplicity. The next time she is going to make you a dress tell her to take a walk through our National Gallery——

PEGGIE. Oh, Sir Stephen, you surely wouldn't dress me like those old guys in the National Gallery. What would my partners say?

SIR S. Your partners! Ah, you pretty tyrant, you'll turn a great many heads and set a great many hearts beating to-night!

PEGGIE. Shall I? Shall I?

SIR S. Why, you've set my old worn-out heart fluttering, and, goodness knows, it ought to have done beating for pretty girls at seventy-five—it ought to know better at seventy-five! But it doesn't, and—
[*rising with great determination*]—I've a great mind——

PEGGIE. [*A little alarmed.*] Sir Stephen, what are you going to do?

SIR S. Don't you remember your promise ?

PEGGIE. My promise ?

SIR S. Your birthday party six years ago ! You danced with me, and you promised that I should be your first partner at your first ball after you came out !

PEGGIE. Of course—I'd forgotten !

SIR S. But I hadn't ! Will you keep your promise, Peggie ? Will you keep your promise ?

PEGGIE. Wouldn't it be dangerous and—you don't really wish it ?

SIR S. [*Sinking down.*] You're right, my dear. I'm foolish with old age. Forgive me !

PEGGIE. I'm sorry to disappoint you. But you'll be able to see us dancing across the garden. You can stand at that window and look on.

SIR S. Look on ! That's all I'm fit for now—to look on at life ! [*Turning away his head.*]

PEGGIE. Sir Stephen, what's the matter ?

SIR S. I've always been in the thick of the fight, Peggie. And I feel to-night as strong as ever I did, and they tell me I must lay up and look on—[*rising with great energy and determination*—] I won't ! I won't !

PEGGIE. Sir Stephen !

SIR S. I can't bear it, Peggie. I've enjoyed my life, and I don't want to leave it. I want to live, and live, and live, and I will ! Ah, what a selfish old coward I am ! I'm like a man who has sat down to a good table d'hôte, and eaten and drunk his fill, and now the host tells me that my place is wanted for another guest, I cry out and want to have my dinner over again ! Don't take any notice of me, dear. Tell me about your partners. Who's going to dance with you to-night ?

PEGGIE. Oh, I suppose, Mr. Lascelles, Freddie Lister, Lord Doverbury, Johnny Butler, Sir Egerton Wendover, Dick French—amongst others.

SIR S. Peggie—

PEGGIE. Yes——

SIR S. You won't misunderstand me, dear. I'm old enough to be your grandfather. [*Takes her hand very tenderly.*] You won't misunderstand me. [*Very seriously.*] Take care how you choose your partner for life. You'll have a wide choice, and all your future happiness, and the happiness perhaps of many generations to come will depend on the one moment when you say "Yes" to one of the scores of young fellows who'll ask you to be his wife. Take care, dear! Take care! Look him thoroughly up and down! Be sure that he has a good full open eye that can look you straight in the face, and be sure that the whites of his eyes are clear. Take care he hasn't got a queer-shaped head, or a low forehead. A good round head, and a good full high forehead, do you hear? Notice the grip of his hand when he shakes hands with you! Take care it's strong and firm, and not cold and dry. No young man should have a cold dry hand. Don't say "Yes" till you've seen him out of trousers, in riding dress, or court dress. Look at the shape of his legs—a good well-shaped leg, eh, Peggie? And take care it is his leg! See that he's well-knit and a little lean, not flabby; doesn't squint; doesn't stammer; hasn't got any nervous tricks or twitchings. Don't marry a bald man! They say we shall all be bald in ten generations. Wait ten generations, Peggie, and then don't marry a bald man! Can you remember all this, dear? Watch his walk! See that he has a good springy step, and feet made of elastic—can do his four or five miles an hour without turning a hair. Don't have him if he has a cough in the winter or the spring. Young men ought never to have a cough. And be sure he can laugh well and heartily—not a snigger, or a wheeze, or a cackle, but a good, deep, hearty laugh right down from the bottom of his chest. And if he has a little money, or even a good bit, so much the better! There now! You choose a man like that, Peggie, and I won't promise you that you'll be happy,

but if you're not it won't be your fault, and it won't be his, and it won't be mine !

PEGGIE. Very well, Sir Stephen, I'll try and remember.

SIR S. Do, my dear, do ! It's a good legacy, my dear. I've left you another. You won't be disappointed when my will's read——

PEGGIE. Oh, Sir Stephen !

SIR S. No, you won't ; but remember my advice to-night. That's the best wedding present for any girl.

PEGGIE. Very well, Sir Stephen ! I must be going. Good-bye. *[Giving her hand.]*

SIR S. Yes, I suppose you mustn't stay. *[Taking her hand, keeping it as he had kept CRANE'S, as if he couldn't bear to let her go.]* Good-bye.

[Looking longingly at her with a mute entreaty to stay. PEGGIE draws her hand away, puts on cloak, takes up bouquet, and goes to door, left. He watches her all the while.]

PEGGIE. *[At door, runs back to him.]* Sir Stephen, I'll keep my promise. You shall be my first partner. *[Offering her card.]* Write your name down for my first dance.

SIR S. But I shan't be there.

PEGGIE. I'll stay out, and keep it for you.

SIR S. No, no——

PEGGIE. Yes, yes ! I insist. Put your name down ! *[He writes on her card. Enter Nurse, left.]*

PEGGIE. Good-bye, Sir Stephen.

SIR S. Good-bye, Peggie ! *[Softly.]* Peggie ! Her name was Peggie ! My wife's name was Peggie !

[She bends and kisses his forehead ; then goes to door, turns and looks at him.]

PEGGIE. Au 'voir !

[Blows him a kiss and exit, left. SIR STEPHEN looks longingly after her, walks a little up and down the room.]

NURSE. [*Anxiously.*] Sir Stephen, don't you think you might lie down now?

SIR S. Run away! Run away!

NURSE. Won't you rest a little on the sofa?

SIR S. Run away! Run away!

NURSE. Can I get you anything?

SIR S. Run away! Run away! [*Pacing up and down.*] Mr. Daniel Famariss hasn't come yet?

NURSE. No. You know they said that he was away surveying in an out-of-the-way country, where no message could reach him.

SIR S. If he should come too late, tell him—tell him—I'm gone surveying in an out-of-the-way country—where no message can reach me! [*Sits down, changing tone.*] Dear me, Nurse, I'm afraid this dying is going to be a very tiresome business for both of us!

NURSE. Oh, Sir Stephen, I'm sure I don't mind!

SIR S. You don't? You don't mind? You're in no hurry? That's very good of you.

NURSE. Sir Stephen, don't you think——

SIR S. What?

NURSE. Last night you said you would send for a clergyman.

SIR S. Did I? That was at two o'clock in the morning. How horribly demoralized a man gets at two o'clock in the morning!

NURSE. But, Sir Stephen——

SIR S. Well?

NURSE. Don't you think you ought to begin to think of better things?

SIR S. Well. I'm seventy-five. Perhaps it is time. What better things?

NURSE. Death and—judgment.

SIR S. Don't talk nonsense. I don't call death and judgment better things.

NURSE. But, Sir Stephen—you will be judged.

SIR S. Judged? Yes. But I shan't be judged by the prayers I've said and the psalms I've sung. I shan't be judged by the lies I've told, and the deceits

I've practised, and the passions I've given way to. I shan't be judged by the evil and rottenness in me. No, I shall be judged by the railways I've made, and the canals I've scooped, and the bridges I've built—and let me tell you, my dear creature, my accounts are in good order, and ready for inspection at any moment, and I believe there's a good balance on my side. [*Guests have been assembling in the ballroom. Dance music bursts out. Dancing begins.*] Ah! What tune is that?

[*Goes up to window, begins dancing a few steps, swaying with the music.*]

NURSE. [*Frightened.*] Sir Stephen! Sir Stephen!

SIR S. Run away! Run away!

NURSE. Sir Stephen, you wouldn't be found dancing at the end?

SIR S. Why not? I've done my work! Why shouldn't I play for a little while? [*A bell is heard.*] Hark! Wasn't that the front door bell?

NURSE. Yes. [*Goes to door, left.*]

SIR S. Go down stairs and see if that's my son. If it is, tell him——

[*Gentle knock at door left. ADAMS enters a step. The dancing and music are continued in the ballroom.*]

ADAMS. I beg pardon, Sir Stephen. Mr. Daniel Famariss has arrived——

SIR S. Ah! [*Getting excited.*]

ADAMS. And would like to see you.

SIR S. Tell him he knows the conditions.

NURSE. But, Sir Stephen——

SIR S. Run away, my good soul! Run away! [*To ADAMS.*] He knows the conditions. If he accepts them I shall be pleased to see him.

DAN'S voice outside door, Father!

SIR S. Shut that door.

[*ADAMS nearly closes door, which is kept open a few inches from the other side.*]

DAN. [*Outside.*] Father! You won't shut the door in my face?

SIR S. Keep on that side of it, then. Adams, you can go. Leave the door ajar.

[*Exit ADAMS, left. SIR STEPHEN, with an imperious gesture, points Nurse to door right. Exit Nurse, right, with an appealing gesture to SIR STEPHEN.*]

SIR S. [*Goes to door, left; it is still open a few inches.*] Are you there, Dan?

DAN. [*Outside.*] Yes, father.

SIR S. I vowed I'd never set eyes on you again, till you owned you were wrong about those girders. You were wrong? [*No reply.*] You were wrong? [*No reply.*] Do you hear? Confound you, you know you were wrong. [*No reply.*] Do you hear, Dan? Why won't you say you were wrong? You won't! [*Slams door, goes, sits, has an outburst of anger, recovers, listens, goes back to door, opens it a little.*] Are you there, Dan?

DAN. [*Outside.*] Yes, father.

SIR S. You were wrong, Dan. [*No reply.*] I haven't got long to live, Dan. It's angina pectoris, and the next attack will kill me. It may come at any moment. Dan, you were wrong? Why won't you say so? Even if you tell a lie about it? [*Pause.*]

DAN. [*Outside.*] I was wrong.

SIR S. Ah! [*Flings open the door, DAN runs in. SIR STEPHEN meets him, embraces him affectionately, with a half sob.*] Why didn't you say it before? You knew how much I loved you. Why did you keep apart from me all these years?

DAN. I'm sorry, sir. But perhaps it was for the best. I've done very well.

SIR S. Of course you have. You are my son. But how much better you'd have done if you had stuck to me! How much better we should both have done! I'm sorry, too, Dan. I was wrong, too—not about the girders. You *were* wrong about them,

Dan. But I was wrong to be angry and to swear I wouldn't see you. Ah, what could I have done with you at my side! I could have carried out my Milford Haven scheme. Perhaps it isn't too late! [*Going to bureau, getting more and more excited.*] I've got all the plans here—— [*Taking out a heap of plans.*]

DAN. Not now, father, not now!

SIR S. Yes, now, my boy! To-morrow may be too late! [*Going to table.*] Come here, my lad! Oh, Dan, what years we've wasted! Come here! I want you to carry this out. You'll have immense opposition. Beat it down! You'll have to buy Shadwell and his lot. They're a dirty gang. But you'll have to do it. I hate bribery, Dan, but when you've got to do it, do it thoroughly! Then there's Mincham. Buy him over, if you can, at a small figure—say a thousand pounds—he's a mean little cur; but offer him that, and if he won't take it, snap your fingers at him, and swamp him! Remember the trick, the scoundrel's trick, he served me over the granite for the viaduct. Remember it, Dan, and don't spare him! swamp him!¹ swamp him! [*With great energy of hate.*]

DAN. Father——

SIR S. Bring your chair up. I must go on now—while it's all before me! I want you to carry this Milford Haven scheme out! I want it to be said that what old Stephen Famariss couldn't do, young Dan Famariss could! The father was a great man, the son shall be a greater, eh? Look here, you must start on this side. I've had all the soundings made——

DAN. To-morrow, father, to-morrow!

SIR S. No, now! There's no such thing as to-morrow! We'll go through it now—in case—There's a great world-tussle coming, Dan—I shan't live to see it—but it's coming, and the engineer that ties England and America will do a good turn to both countries. England to America in four days! I want that crown

¹ 1 Kings, chap. ii., verses 8, 9.

to rest on your head! Look! you must begin here!
Look! Just there! You must throw a bridge over——

[Stops suddenly, puts his hand to his heart, his face indicates intense agony. Nurse enters right.]

DAN. Father——

SIR S. *[Persisting, rising, with a wild aimless gesture.]* Throw a bridge from here—to the other side, and then——

DAN. Father, what is it?

SIR S. The end, Dan. *[His face shows that he is suffering great pain. A great burst of dance music. Nurse brings him chair to sit.]* No, thank you. I'll die standing. England to America in four days. *[Long pause. He stands bolt upright with great determination.]* You were wrong about those girders, Dan—My Peggie—I wonder if it's all moonshine—Peggie—My Peggie——

[Dies, tumbles on floor. Nurse and DAN stand over him. Music and dancing in ballroom louder than ever. Nurse kneels over him and watches, while Big Ben in distance strikes eleven. Nurse nods to DAN in confirmation that it is all over.]

CURTAIN.

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